

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-06

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R 041212Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0191

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, SU, ET

SUBJ: WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE ON RESUMED CIVIL WAR

IN SUDAN

REF: KHARTOUM 1770

1. FOREIGN OFFICE ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HASSAN EL AMIN EL BASHIRT ASKED CHARGE TO COME IN AUGUST 2 TO DISCUSS WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE (AND ANOTHER SUBJECT REPORTED SEPARATELY). EL BASHIR EXPRESSED THANKS THAT MINISTRY HAD BEEN INFORMED OF STORY'S APPEARANCE BY EMBASSY (CHARGE HAD BROUGHT IT TO ATTENTION OF DIRECTOR OF NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICAS DEPARTMENT HASSAN EL MISBAH ON JULY 30) AND SAID THAT HE HAD ALSO RECEIVED CABLED REPORTS FROM SUDANESE MISSIONS IN WHASHINGTON, NEW YORK, ROME, RABAT, BEIRUT AND ONE OR TWO OTHER CITIES. ACCORDING TO EL BASHIR WP STORY HAD BEEN PICKED UP BY PRESS IN ROME ("ROME DAILY AMERICAN") AND OTHER CITIES MENTIONED. HE OPINED THAT PUBLICATION OF STORY IN ROME MIGHT BE CONNECTED WITH VATICAN'S TRADITIONAL HUMANITARIAN CONCERN WITH THE PLIGHT OF REFUGEES.

2. ACTING UNDER SECRETARY SAID THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH FOREIGN MINISTER JAMAL MOHAMMED AHMED ON LATTER'S RETURN FROM OAU SUMMIT THAT MORNING. HE SAID GOS WAS CONCERNED

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OVER PUBLICATION OF OBVIOUSLY FALSE STORY, ESPECIALLY SINCE IT

COINCIDED WITH SENTENCES HANDED OUT IN AKOBO TRIAL (KHARTOUM 1776)
AND WOULD THEREFORE FUEL THE NOTORIOUS SUDANESE RUMOR MILL.

3. EL BASHIR TWICE SAID THAT WP SHOULD BE URGED TO SEND ITS
REPORTER TO THE SOUTHERN SUDAN, WHERE HE WOULD BE FREE TO
TRAVEL AND OBSERVE
CONDITIONS FOR HIMSELF RATHER THAN RELY
ON QUESTIONABLE SOURCES OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY.

4. WITH REGARD TO THE SOURCES, EL BASHIR NOTED THEY INCLUDED
BOTH SUDANESE REFUGEES AND ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS. HE SAID GOS
WAS EXTREMELY UNHAPPY ABOUT THIS AND INTENDED TO TAKE IT UP
OFFICIALLY IN ADDIS ABABA.

5. EL BASHIR READILY ACCEPTED CHARGE'S STATEMENT THAT USG
HAD BEEN IN NO WAY RESPONSIBLE FOR STORY'S APPEARANCE AND
THAT US OFFICIALS HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED NOR QUERIED
IN ADVANCE. HE ALSO APPEARED SATISFIED WITH RESPONSE
THAT DEPARTMENT PRESS SPOKESMAN WOULD GIVE TO QUESTIONS
GENERATED BY THE WP ARTICLE.

COMMENT: GOS CLEARLY UPSET BY THE STORY'S APPEARANCE BUT
IN NO WAY HOLDS USG RESPONSIBLE. THE FACT THAT CHARGE
CALLED IN AT ALL IS FURTHER INDICATION THAT GOS SENSITIVE
TO OPERATION IN SOUTHERN SUDAN.

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